

1093

C!N

Final Crisis: Legion of Three Worlds

Their Name Is Legion

They were the first super-team of the Silver Age. They were the first teen super-team not comprised of sidekicks of established adult heroes. Their adventures were among the first to stress long-form continuity over standalone stories. And with a career entering its sixth decade, they're the oldest group of young adult heroes in comics.

They're the Legion of Super-Heroes... and they're about to become a linchpin of the DC Universe, thanks to *Geoff Johns & George Pérez*.

Johns and Pérez are the creative force behind *Final Crisis: Legion of Three Worlds*, a five-part miniseries launching in August.

According to Johns, the epic storyline set in the 31st century is accessible for both long-time Legion fans and those people who have never read a Legion comic before—and it will have some sort of tie into *Grant Morrison & J.G. Jones' Final Crisis*.

It's obvious that Johns is a Legion fan—not only did the team play an important role in "Lightning Saga" story that Johns & Meltzer told last year in *Justice League* and *Justice Society*, but he also made them the focus of a best-selling *Action Comics* story arc. "My original love for the Legion stems from the love *Paul Levitz* has," Johns told *Comic Shop Newsarama's Vaneta Rogers*. "Upon reading his stories, you become infected with it. That's where it started for me. My favorite Legion characters are the three founders—Cosmic Boy, Saturn Girl and Lightning Lad—and Brainiac 5, Wildfire and Dawnstar, and Polar Boy and Sun Boy. And essentially, those eight are going to be my main Legionnaires.

According to Johns, *Legion of Three Worlds* "is really picking up on a group of aliens from all different planets coming together to try to reassure the universe that, hey, we can all unite; we can all co-exist and learn from one another. But the universe itself is plagued by a growing xenophobia and is saying, a united universe is a dream; this will never happen; you're obsolete. And that's where we pick up on the Legion."

It isn't all superheroes that the universe views as obsolete—just the Legion. "All these aliens—like a Durlan and a Braalian and someone from Insk—coming together and standing side by side, and fighting for what Superman taught the entire universe: Truth, justice and the (ancient) American Way... You see these Legionnaires striving to do what Superman did, striving to be heroes to a universe; where Superman was a hero to Earth, they're going for the whole universe. And it's not an easy job.

"So you have everyone telling them, 'This is impossible. You can't change how people think. You can't change how people act.' At one point, someone tells them, 'You still call yourself boys and girls, and a united universe is a boys and girls dream.'"

While the previously mentioned Legionnaires are at the core of Johns' story, they're not the only Legionnaires appearing in the five-part. "There are three Legions out there that fans have explored and seen and read about, to me," Johns said. "The original Legion and the *Zero Hour* reboot are the ones I read when I was in high school and college. I went from the Levitz/Giffen era through the *Zero Hour* reboot with *Mark Waid* and *Tom Peyer* and *Stuart Immonen* and *Jeff Moy*. That was a whole new Legion and they started it from scratch. And *Mark Waid* simply started it again. So there's been three. But the focus is definitely on Superman and the Legion."

As Johns has already indicated, the focus will center on three characters who are, as Johns explained, a perfectly balanced superhero triumvirate. "Cosmic Boy is like the all-around leader who puts it all on his shoulders, but he's magnetic. His powers are all about magnetics, and so it carries over to his personality. And he struggles to bring all the Legion back together. He's like, 'We can do this! We can bring it together!' It comes naturally to him. Whereas *Lightning Lad* is like, 'You know what? Whatever happens, happens. Screw it.'"

"And *Saturn Girl* tempers them. *Saturn Girl* is the heart and soul of the Legion of Super-Heroes. When everybody's saying, 'Legion doesn't work anymore. There's too much xenophobia. You can't



change people.' *Saturn Girl* says, 'Yes, you can.' Then suddenly, you realize she can read people's minds. She knows everyone's deepest, darkest secrets. If she has faith, then at the base level, human beings and aliens and everybody can reach that goal, can reach that achievement and have that goodness inside them. I believe her. I'm with her. And that's why *Saturn Girl* is so important to the Legion. She says, 'We can do this.' And it's like, well, if she believes it, then I believe it, too. She's at the epicenter of truth for the entire universe for me.

"Those three characters are absolutely vital to the DC Universe—I don't care what year it is. Those characters helped teach Superman all about truth, justice, and the American way. And if you look at each of them, they all represent one of those. You have *Saturn Girl*, who's embodying truth. You have *Lightning Lad* embodying justice—sometimes to a fault. You have *Cosmic Boy* embodying the American way. He's the leader, the one trying to bring all these aliens together, and the one who hopes for a better tomorrow. A uni-

verse that is a melting pot. They're some of DC's best heroes."

Joining Johns on *Legion of Three Worlds* is *George Pérez*, a veteran artist with a prestigious history as illustrator of such "cast-of-thousands" epics as *Crisis on Infinite Earths* and *JLA/Aeongers*. What made Pérez take on yet another star-studded saga? "Dan DiDio told me all these plans for *Final Crisis* and that the Legion would be one of the sister books. One of the projects I wanted to was a comic that collected all versions of the Legion. I thought that would have been a real joy. So when I found out that was the main focus of *Legion of Three Worlds*, of course I said 'that has my fingerprints all over it without my even touching it.' And Dan agreed, because I wanted to do it, but also because I'm one of the crazy guys who volunteers for one of these 'cast of thousands' assignments. It was pretty much a done deal."

Legion of Three Worlds is particularly appealing to Pérez, a Legion fan from way back. "I'm grateful that Geoff is using the classic version of the Legion as the main focal point in the first issue... Because it's like, while I enjoyed doing the Legion in *Brave and the Bold*, it was almost like *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. There was something not quite right about them because they weren't the same Legion I grew up with..."

What's particularly surprising is that this is Pérez's first shot at illustrating a full Legion adventure. "I did draw them in covers when I first went over to DC around 1980 or 1981, but for whatever reason, I never drew Legion. I mean, they offered me the *Titans* and I had interest in doing the *JLA*, and *Legion*—I got to do covers.

"Of course, I've done them as guest stars. But yeah, it is amazing that two of my favorite series when I was young, when I was really starting into comics, was *Legion of Super-Heroes* and, weirdly enough, *Metal Men*. And it's amazing how many times I was able to sneak them in to any story I could," Pérez said with a laugh. "The *Metal Men* even sneaked into *JLA/Aeongers* for no apparent reason other than the fact that I've got to draw the *Metal Men*!"

Since Pérez had no established history with the Legion, the illustrator found it necessary to do some research before tackling the assignment. "I spent over a month getting together the number of references that needed to be gathered. Even then, it's still sometimes contradictory, because the Legions have gone through so many changes that when they give me a specific request for a character, the references they send me might be contradictory to what the story calls for wherein a character's costume has changed.

"I would bandy it back and forth with the writer and the editor. I'd say, 'OK, these are the versions we have here.' Sometimes it's a question of what year the character appeared in that costume, and we'd try to find what the most recent costume is. I had to straighten all those contradictions out. It was basically just a lot of talking. Geoff would sometimes refer to a particular look or a particular issue, and he'd say, 'This is what I imagine.' Yet some characters had gone through multiple changes since that particular issue he was citing, so we had to find a compromise. It's been a lot of work..." Pérez explained.

Surprisingly, Pérez has no more idea how the series will end than do the Legion's many fans. "Even though Geoff sent me an overview some time ago, I've avoided reading it all, because I like to be surprised, too," Pérez said. "I haven't the faintest idea what they're setting me up for, as far as the story. All I know is it has to do with *Final Crisis*, and it features all the Legion of Super-Heroes and Super-Villains, Superman, and — of course it's going to be no surprise since it's in the teaser — Prime, formerly *Superboy-Prime*."

One thing's for sure—Pérez is enjoying his work. "I'm having the time of my life. It's a lot of work. I'm spending a lot of long hours on this book. But again, as I've told you more than once and anyone within earshot, I've always wanted to do the Legion, and it's criminal that I haven't. And finally — finally — justice is being served, as only a superhero comic can bring it."

Geoff Johns hopes that *Legion of Three Worlds* will introduce legions of readers to the veteran superteam. "I really hope that a lot of people coming to the Legion for the first time see how interesting and intriguing these guys are. They're all aliens. They're all like Superman. They're all immigrants to earth, inspired by what he did in the 31st century. And there's still problems they have to solve."

Readers will learn more about those problems—and their solutions—in August, when *Final Crisis: Legion of Three Worlds* #1 is slated for release.

by **Vaneta Rogers** (with **Cliff Biggers**)

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by Comic Shop News in cooperation
with Matt Brady and newsarama.com



CSNsider

• Boom Studios is assembling a one-shot to raise funds to help cover the medical bills for artist Josh Medors, who has been diagnosed with cancer. *Pulp Tales Benefit Book*, a 24-page \$3.99 comic, will feature material by Ben Templesmith, Steve Niles, Josh Fialkov, Kody Chamberlain, B. Clay Moore, Chris Samnee, Tony Fleecs, Dan Taylor, and others.

• Greg Rucka has confirmed that a *Batwoman* book is in the works; the character will also appear in the *Final Crisis: Revelation* miniseries.

• Comics legend Gene Colan, a veteran illustrator who became a star in the late 1960s when he returned to Marvel Comics (first under the nom de plume Adam Austin, then under his own name), is in very poor health: the

acclaimed artist's liver is failing, leading to related health complications such as fluid retention and encephalitis, his wife has reported.

• Skottie Young reports that Marvel's version of L. Frank Baum's fantasy classic *The Wizard of Oz* will be a faithful adaptation of the novel, avoiding the changes made for the cinematic versions.

• Bill Willingham has been given permission to use Peter Pan characters in *Fables* beginning with #75.



• Jeff Parker has hinted that characters from his *Agents of Atlas* series will play a role in *Secret Invasion*, although he didn't say what that role was.

• Eric Canete has been tapped to replace Mat Broome as artist of Rick Remender's *The End League* as of the fifth issue. "Mat has a full time job at Sony and a family and so I think he needed some time to catch up," Remender explained to *Comic Shop Newsarama's* Chris Arrant. "He's been working like a manic doing all of these jobs. We always knew he was just killing himself and that he'd eventually need to take time off. He'll have completed the first trade paperback worth of material before he leaves.. With Eric on the book full time and taking the book monthly I expect the amazing sales and buzz we've generated so far to only grow."

• Devil's Due has entered into a publishing deal with Capcom that will lead to the launch of four new comics based on Capcom properties, including *Bionic Commando* and *Lost Planet*. "DDP is very excited to be joining forces with Capcom," president Josh Blaylock said.

"Not only are these awesome games, but they have great stories behind them ripe for comics, including a vintage classic with *Bionic Commando* that's been revived along with the new sequel." No release dates have been set yet, but Devil's Due promises more info later this summer.



• Michael Turner is providing the art for a 1-for-25 variant cover edition of *Ultimate Origins #1* and a 1-for-75 *Ultimate Origins #1 Turner Sketch Variant*. Marvel promises that this book is going to pull the covers back on all sorts of Ultimate secrets—secrets that will lead to big changes in the Ultiverse and the end of some series.

• Marvel is going back to press on a heap o' comics, including *Invincible Iron Man #1* (two different covers—one featuring art by Ryan Meinerding, the other featuring variant Iron Man armor art by Salvador Larroca); *Iron Man: Viva Las Vegas #1* (featuring art by Adi Granov); *Dark Tower: The Long Road Home #2*; *Mighty Avengers #12* (featuring art by Jim Cheung); *Secret Invasion #2* (featuring art by Leinil Yu); and *Secret Invasion #1* (third printing, featuring art by Leinil Yu). Look for them in the next week or so.

• Readers who are budgeting for a copy of *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen: Black Dossier—The Absolute Edition HC* will have a little longer to save their shekels, as the release date has been pushed back six weeks to July 30th.

• *Eternals #1* will have a previously-unannounced 1-for-75 variant featuring art by Daniel Acuna.

DC-cisions

It's an election year, and a lot of people are making decisions regarding candidates, platforms, and the like... and apparently, the same process goes on in the DC Universe!

DCU: Decisions, a four-part miniseries beginning this fall courtesy of Bill Willingham, Judd Winick, & Stephane Roux, will pull a number of DC heroes in the political process as they're led to choose political sides due, in part, to the actions of one of their own... a hero who has already played the political game during his run for mayor.

DCU Executive Editor Dan DiDio explained to *Comic Shop Newsarama's* Matt Brady how the project came about. "We're entering a very interesting election year this year, and what I think is important about it is that it's that there's this excitement – a sense of 'building'... there's change in the air in regards to the whole political process that's at play in the United States. What we want to do is tap into that emotion, and tell a story that plays in the DC Universe with our characters, while using the political backdrop we're seeing now to help to define our characters better.

"For the first time, we'll be having our characters make true political stands in regards to their leanings, as well as what motivates them to be heroes, and what they believe is necessary for their world and their country to move in the direction they believe to be the right one."

What pulls the heroes into the political arena? "An assassin in the midst of the heroes who's basically trying to disrupt and destroy the entire political process. In the opening sequence of the story, there is an assassination attempt on one of the candidates, which brings



Publisher
Comic Shop News, Inc.

Editors
Cliff Biggers
Ward Batty

©2007 Comic Shop News, Inc.
All Rights Reserved

Editorial Office
2770 Carillon Crossing
Marietta, GA 30066
fax (928) 441-5990
cliffbig@comicshopnews.com

Business Office
3577-A Chamblee-
Tucker Rd. #215
Atlanta, GA 30341
(770) 939-1364
fax (678) 669-1525
wbatty@csnsider.com
www.csnsider.com

several of the heroes into the fold once they realize the scope of the conspiracy and more importantly, the impact that it would have on the government and the country.

"As the heroes are motivated and start to react to the assassination attempts, they start to express their own political beliefs, and start to discuss amongst themselves the importance of the process, and their role in the process. Several of the beats we'll be showing here will play out into the DCU following the miniseries as well."

Of course, politics and the DC Universe aren't strangers: not only has Oliver Queen weighed a run for mayor and for senate at different times in his comic book career, but even Superman nemesis Lex Luthor has pursued his political aspirations. Luthor even won, taking the White House in the process. However, this time around, the political issues and candidates will seem a little more real to readers who also follow the news. "This is *not* about the actual candidates. Barack Obama, Hilary Clinton and John McCain do *not* appear in this comic," DiDio said with a laugh. "These are candidates who represent particular political beliefs, and it's more about why the heroes are motivated or respond to particular candidates themselves, or the platforms of particular candidates."

"And also, this isn't about a hero trying to become an elected official — this is about heroes choosing or naming a political affiliation in regards to their own beliefs—which include, of course, being a hero."

"Just like in our world, there are moderate beliefs, there are conservative beliefs, there are liberal beliefs. There are Republicans and Democrats. The process and what the various political beliefs and parties stand for remain the same. We'll be exploring those beliefs as they exist within the DC Universe."

Which characters will be at the center of the story? "Naturally, because of the way we've played Green Arrow over the years, and because of the *One Year Later* story where he became mayor, he's front and center in the first issue," DiDio said. "But beyond that, the story will literally run the gamut of the heroes in the DCU, and we'll be exploring the story from a number of different heroes' points of view as one roving reporter tries to pin down each of the heroes individual beliefs."

Why blend the fictional world of the DCU with the reality of contemporary politics—a reality that can often be divisive? "Because of the process and the discussion that's taking place in the world right now, and more importantly, it may be divisive, but it's also defining. This is just another step for us to define who our characters are. This is something that we've been doing ever since

Identity Crisis. With that, we examined people's personal beliefs on what it took to be a hero and how much they were willing to sacrifice for it.

"In regards to the heroes of the DC Universe, I've always said that our heroes are proactive. They go out and they try to do good. Where the differences come from with the heroes is based in what is their idea of the greater good? Again, in examining what people's political beliefs are, you also start to understand what they believe the greater good to be, and it helps define our characters further. Therefore I think it's a good thing for us to bring this examination to our stories and to our characters so we can further hone and differentiate who our characters are and who our different heroes are."

How do the other heroes respond when one of their own makes a political endorsement? "That's actually responsible for starting a lot of the story—when Green Arrow actually endorses a candidate—and you see the actual effect of that endorsement as it plays out through the polls and the political process. That motivates and galvanized some of the other heroes to step up."

Who made the decisions as to which heroes favor which political parties? "We started with four people in the room — myself, Ian Sattler, Judd and Bill. The interesting thing about the two writers that we brought in is that each one of them have a political point of view that's diametrically opposed to the other. What that allows us to do is, we believe, explore both sides of the story without selling one side short, or only giving one lip service while we fully explore the other. It allows us to explore all sides of the political process and the political motivations as the story develops. It's not about a right or wrong, it's about the whole process itself and more importantly, what motivates people to participate."

How does DiDio expect this series to affect the way readers view DC's heroes? "I want people to take away an understanding of the depth of commitment of our heroes, not just that they're vigilantes, but that they *believe* in the system that they participate in. I want people to take away that fact that our heroes are motivated by different reasons and have different views, but yet all of them are able to work together doing what's right for the people they protect, for the country, and for the world. And I want people to take away the idea that all of our heroes aren't of a single mind or of one motivation. Each one is driven and driven in different ways to do different things in order to achieve the greater good."

DCU: Decisions is slated to debut in September.



Amos 'n' Image

Image Comics, already tapped in to the music biz with their graphic novels based on the works of *Belle & Sebastian* and *Coheed & Cambria*, are hard at work on a massive collection inspired by the music of the most popular female singer-songwriters of the past decade.

Comic Book Tattoo, a massive 480-page 12" x 12" (album-sized, for those of you with an interest in vinyl) full-color anthology, will feature the work on impressive array of comics talent—and it's all based on the music of *Tori Amos* adapting the themes and ideas behind her songs into a lush volume of sequential art.



"I have been surprised, excited and pleasantly shocked by these comics that are extensions of the songs that I have loved and therefore welcome these amazing stories of pictures and words because they are uncompromisingly inspiring," Amos said. "It shows you thought is a powerful, formidable essence that can have a breathtaking domino effect."

Amos worked with editor *Rantz Hoseley* to put together this impressive collection, which will feature work from such creators as (get ready—it's quite a list!):

- David Mack
- Josh Hechinger, Matthew Humphreys, Jonathan Tsuei, Eric Canete
- Jason Horn, Dean Trippe
- Sara Ryan, Jonathan Case
- Rantz A. Hoseley, James Stokoe
- Tristan Crane, Atticus Wolrab
- Kako

- Nikki Cook
- Drew Bell, Kevin Mellon, Mark Sweeney (C)
- Jeff Carroll, Mike May
- Jeremy Haun, Amber Stone (C)
- Leif Jones
- Elizabeth Genco, Carla Speed McNeil, Mark Sweeney (C)
- Kelly Sue DeConnick, Andy Macdonald, Nick Filardi (C), Kristyn Ferretti (L)
- Cat Mihos, Andre Szymanowicz, Gabe Bautista (C), Kristyn Ferretti (L)
- C.B. Cebulski, Ethan Young, Joey Weltjens & Lee Duhig For Guru Efx (C)
- Omaha Perez
- Irra Page, Mark Buckingham
- Rantz A. Hoseley, Ming Doyle, Mark Sweeney (C), Kristyn Ferretti (L)
- Mike Maihack
- John Ney Reiber, Ryan Kelly, Kristyn Ferretti (L)
- Alice Hunt, Trudy Cooper
- Jonathan Hickman
- Matthew S. Armstrong
- Neil Kleid, Christopher Mitten, Kristyn Ferretti (L)
- Stephanie Leong, Sonia Leong
- Peov
- Kelly Sue DeConnick, Lauren McCubbin
- John Bivens
- Hope Larson
- Emma Vieceli, Faye Yong (C)
- Chris Arrant, Star St. Germain
- Mike Dringenberg
- Paul Maybury
- Jim Bricker, Craig Taillefer
- Dame Darcy
- G. Willow Wilson, Steve Sampson
- Neal Shaffer, Daniel Krall
- Adisakdi Tantimedh, Ken Meyer Jr.
- Mark Sable, Salgood Sam
- Tom Williams
- James Owen
- Seth Peck, Daniel Heard
- Ivan Brandon, Callum Alexander Watt
- Leah Moore & John Reppion, Pia Guerra, Mark Sweeney, Kristyn Ferretti
- Jessica Staley, Shane White
- Ted McKeever, Chris Chuckry (C)
- Jimmie Robinson
- Lea Hernandez
- Derek McCulloch, Colleen Doran, Jason Hanley (L)

"While the connections between comics and music have been long established by generations of creators,"



Hoseley said, "Comic Book Tattoo shows how these two art forms inspire and feed off of each other across all the classifications, genres and styles of comic storytelling. Like Tori's music, these stories run the gamut of human experience, emotion and imagination brought to life by some of the most compelling and innovative creators in the field of comics."

Look for *Comic Book Tattoo* in late July.

Archie's Keene for Fashion

It's been a long time since the days of "model comics," when the light-hearted, glamorous life of fashion models was fodder for comics storytelling. But Archie's going to recreate that bygone genre with the release of *Katy Keene Special #1*, written and illustrated by Andrew Pepoy.

The 6" x 9" 112-page graphic novel features an assortment of Katy Keene shorts from the pages of *Archie & Friends* #s 101-110, as well as an all-new story prepared especially for this collection.



"Since the 1940s, fashion model supreme Katy has enthralled audiences with her own self-titled series as well as *Katy Keene Pin-Up Parade* and *Katy Keene Fashion Book Magazine*," Archie's Rick Offenberger said. "Readers have long thrilled to her adventures on the runway as well as her intriguing romances. Best of all, Katy Keene was one of the first interactive comic book series, inviting readers to send in fashion suggestions of their own that were turned into pin-ups and paper dolls that they could cut out and keep! In 2005, Katy returned in a big way in the *Free Comic Book Day* entry for that year.

"By popular demand, Katy soon began appearing again on a regular basis in the pages of *Archie & Friends*. Her new adventures were charted by writer-artist Andrew Pepoy, and were



filled with the same adventure and romance Katy fans had come to expect, served up with a modern-day twist of course – now Katy is a model, movie actress and pop singing sensation rolled into one!"

One of the more interesting stories in the collection features the return of the Archie/MLJ hero The Web... sort of. In this tale, the Web is the focus of a superhero film, and Katy has landed a role in the movie... but her acting duties get sidetracked when she has to figure out who's sabotaging the production.

Katy Keene Special #1 is scheduled for mid-August release.

Meltzer's Displays Will Power

Brad Meltzer helped pave the way for 21st century crises in the DCU with his groundbreaking series *Identity Crisis*. He restored DC's pre-eminent superteam to their former glory with the relaunch of *Justice League of America*.

Problem is, Meltzer has another career in addition to comics writing: he's a best-selling novelist. No problem for him, since his books sell in the millions... but a problem for readers who'd like to see him do nothing more than write comics.

So after his year-long run on *Justice League of America*, Meltzer left comics to work on a new novel. The good news is, the novels are done and Meltzer's coming back to the DCU for a *Final Crisis*-related oneshot, *DC Universe: Last Will & Testament*, which will see print this summer in between issues 3 & 4 of *Final Crisis*. Adam Kubert & John Dell provide the interior art and the cover.

What's the focus of the one shot? Simple – the characters DCU, the day/night before the biggest battle of their respective lives. If *Final Crisis* is the day evil wins, then this is the night before.

So how did DC convince Meltzer to return to comics, even if only for a oneshot? "Dan [DiDio] approached me and said if you did the first bookend, you should do the last one; that's nice and makes my ego feel good, but the reality is that the timing was just right for it," Meltzer told *Comic Shop Newsarama's* Matt Brady. "After every novel, I love that period where I can just lose myself in comics – after *The Millionaires*, I did *Archer's Quest* [a *Green Arrow* story arc]; and after *Zero Game* came *Identity Crisis*; and after *Book of Fate* came *JLA*. I just finished the new novel, and now it's this."

One thing that Meltzer did not want to do was any sort of a sequel tale or follow-up to *Identity Crisis*. "As I said in the very first interview I did with *Newsarama* about *Identity Crisis*, there was always a big picture, and there was always a big theme," Meltzer said. "I felt like this was going to be the story that was going to, as cliché as this sounds, close one door and open another, and really show the bigger picture of the both here."



Meltzer also wanted to avoid an epic tale that would compete with *Final Crisis* in any way. "I love the big moments and the big events, but for me, when it comes to the big scene, I don't care about the world cracking in half – I care about the single person who's standing on that crack as the world splits open beneath them. I like reading about the big moment, but as a writer, I prefer the human moments."

"So as Dan and I were talking I said that I knew in some of the big books, you don't have the time to do everything that you want to do, so I asked if I could do the story of the day before it all falls apart. What is everyone in the DC Universe doing if they believe and think and worry that the next day they are going to die? That is where *Last Will and Testament* came from."

How does each hero prepare for the day the evil wins? Meltzer didn't offer specifics, but he was willing to offer some general insights into the one-shot's focus. "You literally see each of the heroes faced with that question – it's the night before the greatest battle that they're ever going to fight. What are they going to do with that time? They all have very different emotional responses to it – some very obvious, and some completely surprising – even to themselves. It is, without a question, an emotional story, and that's where it becomes that bookend to *Identity Crisis*."

"*Identity Crisis*, for whatever it became and whatever it turned into – so much of it out of my control – is something that I think Dan ran well with, and I'm still very proud of. I'm proud to have created that tapestry that's stretched now over these past three years. This is the chance to look at it, and say, 'Okay, if the universe has been changed in this way, what's the new effect if evil is going to win?' The characters have been through a wringer over the past couple of years – this is a moment where you really get to pull the characters apart. To use the old Hitchcock quote: It's not the bang that's scary – it's the anticipation of it. That's what the entire moment is in this issue."

Last Will & Testament will also feature a few clues about forthcoming events in the DCU. "Just like you saw in *DC Universe Zero*, you're going to see, mixed in with the current story, things that are coming up – hints and beats of things to come that are just as important as anything else in the book," Meltzer said.

DC Universe: Last Will & Testament is scheduled for August release.

Spidey Goes to Congress

...The Library of Congress, that is.

In late April, an anonymous donor presented the Library of Congress with one of the holy grails of comics collecting: the original artwork to the entirety of *Amazing Fantasy* #15, the 1962 comic that first introduced Spider-Man to the world. This donation includes not only the entire Spider-Man story, but also the three backup stories, all produced by Stan Lee & Steve Ditko.





"The donation of these wonderful drawings is a treasured gift to the American people. The opportunity to see the original art behind the published stories will benefit comic-book readers as well as popular-culture scholars," said Sara W. Duke, curator of Popular and Applied Graphic Art in the Library's Prints and Photographs Division. "Looking at the drawings inspires a new appreciation for the artist's skill and design choices and also deepens our understanding of how a superhero created to attract a teenage audience became a cultural icon with mass appeal."

Random pages of Ditko art from this era are rarely seen, due to the frequent industry practice of giving away or destroying original art (at the time, there was no perceived market for the art). An entire story is almost never seen; an entire issue's art is an unprecedented acquisition.

While original art nowadays is approximately 10" x 15" (about 1.5 times the size of the printed comic), original art in the early 1960s was "two-up," or twice the height and width of an original comic. Each page measures approximately 15" x 21", showing off the fine detail that Ditko brought to every panel. The whited out areas, corrections, and paste-overs offer insight into the changes that were made prior



to the book seeing print.

More images from this amazing donation can be seen at the Library of Congress blog at

www.loc.gov/blog/?p=290

The donor, who has asked to remain anonymous, preserved the drawings with great care before turning to the Library of Congress to ensure that the designs will be available to researchers for generations to come. In the next few weeks, the Library plans to scan the drawings for easy access on-site in the Prints and Photographs Reading Room, and the digital reference copies will also help preserve the fragile original artwork.

Is there any chance that Marvel might be able to make arrangements to produce an oversized black and white volume shot from this original art? No word on that—but let's hope that something can be done to offer fans a chance to see this piece of history, reproduced via today's more sophisticated printing to show off the fine detail of Ditko's art that has never been fully seen.

JMS: Braver & Bolder

Several weeks ago, CSN told you that J. Michael Straczynski would be venturing into the DC Universe later this year. Now Straczynski has confirmed that his first major project for DC will be *The Brave & the Bold*, where he'll take over as writer following the departure of Mark Waid, who launched the series with George Pérez last year.

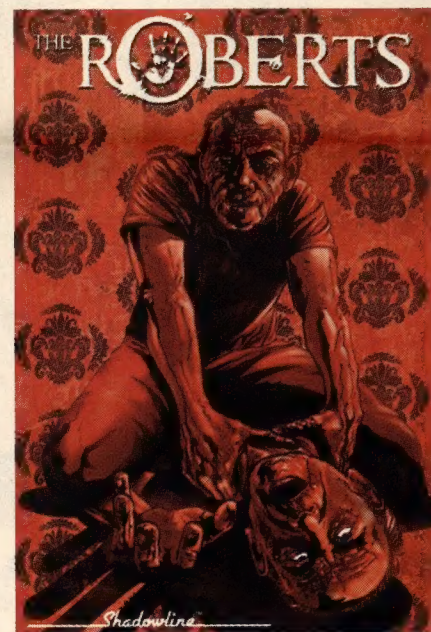
Straczynski explained to *Comic Shop Newsarama's* Matt Brady how the gig came about. "I'd always wanted to play in the DC universe, and once my period of exclusivity ended, there was no reason not to go and have a chat with them. I spoke with Dan DiDio and others and we tossed around some ideas. *Brave and the Bold* was one of the very first things Dan mentioned since it would let me play with as many of the characters as I wanted, in any combination, without having to worry too much about continuity or what was going on in other books."

What makes the DC Universe so appealing? "I think the DC universe is a bit lighter and more polished in some respects, but that's neither better nor worse than being grittier or darker, it's mainly a philosophical thing. Growing up, I always enjoyed Marvel, but I was a massive DC fan—particularly in terms of Batman, Superman and the core DC characters. I have one of the biggest collections of Superman stuff on the Western seaboard."

As for the specific appeal of this book, Straczynski explained that "the breadth of the character list is appealing, and the ability to work outside continuity to some extent. Also, the plan is to do one or at most two-issue arcs, making the books more self-contained,

which I think will be a blessing to readers looking to sample some of the characters. It's like, 'Here's a cool Supergirl story,' you tell it in one or two issues, and you get out rather than trying to drag it out or decompress... I want to do strong character stories underpinned by solid action setpieces. Really dig into the characters."

Straczynski's kick-off story will unite Batman and the Jim Corrigan Spectre; are there any other characters he's particularly interested in bringing together in this series? "Some of the choices are straightforward, others a bit odder. I'm looking for pair-ups that either haven't happened before, or have only happened rarely because that for me was always the appeal of the original *Brave and Bold*, seeing these pairings we hadn't seen before and wondering how the heck they're going to work together. Batman and the Haunted Tank. Atom/Joker. Deadman/Wonder Woman. Flash/Blackhawks. Batman/Dial H. Legion of Substitute Heroes/Inferior Five. Doom Patrol/Legion of Super-Heroes. Superman/Sgt. Rock. Two-Face/Hawk and Dove. Challengers of the Unknown/Metal Men. Just going over the list is fun."



Killer Concept

Imagine the Boston Strangler and the Zodiac Killer, alive and well as old men, sharing their golden years in a retirement community.

Then again, you don't have to imagine it, because writer Wayne Chinsang and artist Erik Rose are imagining it for you in *The Roberts*, a two-issue miniseries from Image Comics.

"I admit, I've always had a morbid fascination with serial murderers," Chinsang said. "When Denis Rader (BTK) finally got caught in 2005 I remember thinking, 'What if this guy had never been caught? What would he be like as an eighty-year-old man? Or as a grandfather? How long could some-

one like him go on living a lie, trying to blend in when he so clearly doesn't?' Those thoughts were the start of *The Roberts*."

Instead of BTK, Chinsang chose two murderers who many believe were never caught: the Boston Strangler and the Zodiac Killer. In *The Roberts*, the killers find themselves immersed in a world of bingo tournaments and social tea hours as they trade "war stories" about what they refer to as the "Golden Age" of mass murder. But camaraderie can also have a dark side, as both men still crave the one thing they feel they've missed out on: infamy.

The Roberts #1, a 48-page black and white comic, is scheduled for early August release.



Ultimate Origins Top Ten

Presented, for your edification, Marvel's Top Ten reasons to read *Ultimate Origins*:

1. Revealed: The secret origin of Wolverine.
2. Uncovered: Cap's hidden secrets.
3. Connected: Cap's origin and the origin of [top secret].
4. Mysterious: The origin of the Hulk is tied to the tragic and untimely deaths of [classified].
5. Shocking: the true origin of mutants.
6. Discover: How Charles Xavier met Magneto and the falling out that may be the downfall of mutantkind.
7. Witness: The First appearance of Ultimate [you'll find out soon enough!].
8. Heartbreaking: The end of the [wouldn't you like to know?].
9. Startling: Learn the never-before-revealed connection between the Ultimates, Ultimate Spider-Man, Ultimate X-Men, and Ultimate FF.
10. Dazzling: New Ultimate characters.

No DMZ for ZMDs

Now here's an ultimate weapon of mass destruction—it's single-minded, indefatigable, and unafraid of death... because it's already dead!

Yes, the military is looking for a few good zombies.. and they find them in *ZMD: Zombies of Mass Destruction*, an action/horror series produced for Red 5 Comics by *Underworld* creator Kevin Grevioux and artist Geraldo Borges.

"*ZMD: Zombies of Mass Destruction* is a bit of a return to my horror roots," Grevioux said. "Prior to creating this series, I was never really a big fan of zombies. But I came up with what I felt was an interesting twist on the genre and I'm thankful that [publishers] Paul Ens and Scott Chitwood were open to the idea."

Air-dropped into the deadliest hot zones, the zombie troops indiscriminately infect every last warring insurgent on either side of the conflict. Specifically engineered to be photosensitive, both the originals and newly created zombies dissolve as a means to control widespread and accidental zombification. This allows live soldiers to enter and safely occupy the now-combatant-free territory.



However, this plan takes a deadly turn when one of the U.S. zombies, dubbed Zombie Zero fails to dissolve at the expected time, and begins to wreak havoc in the Middle East by creating others like him. This leads the U.S. military brass to send in a special operative to quietly take out Zombie Zero and his minions before their existence becomes known to the rest of the world.

"From the beginning, we wanted Red 5 Comics to deliver a wide variety of theatrical-scale and cinematic-style entertainment in the comic medium that we love," Red 5 Comics co-founder Paul Ens said. "We'd been looking for a horror/thriller title to add to our lineup,

but nothing was standing out. When Kevin approached us with *ZMD*, we knew immediately he had a unique and exciting take on a genre that isn't always known for fresh ideas."

ZMD: Zombies of Mass Destruction #1, the kickoff of a six-part miniseries, is slated for July release.

Coming Comics: Dark Horse in August

The quirky art of *Tony Millionaire* is spotlighted in the appropriately entitled *The Art of Tony Millionaire*, a 200-page full-color oversized hardcover featuring

illustrations, comics, stories, photographs, and anecdotes from *Millionaire's* far-reaching career.

It's been more than a decade since *Bernie Wrightson's* stunning illustrated version of *Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's* seminal horror novel last saw print—but *Dark Horse* is set to remedy that



with the release of *Bernie Wrightson's Frankenstein*, a lavish 240-page 9" x 12" hardcover edition featuring the full text of Shelley's novel along with all 47 fine-line illustrations that Wrightson prepared to accompany that text. The larger size will better show off the exquisitely detailed line art of one of the greatest living artists in comics today. (This book is advance solicited for October release.)

The team of Buffy and Fray continue their quest to uncover the purpose of their meeting in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* #17 by Joss Whedon, Karl Moline, & Andy Owens.

The Buffy Merchandising Push continues in August with the release of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer's Tarot*, a 78-card deck illustrated by Paul Lee with text by Rachel Pollack. The package includes an instruction pamphlet, a 64-page softcover book, and a reclosable box with magnetic closure.

Adam Warren continues the misadventures of the badly-named, poorly-costumed heroine in *Empowered Volume Four*. The costumed crimefighter is briefly overjoyed to find herself in the running for one of the superhero community's annual Caped Justice Awards (or "Capeys")—only to discover that her nomination was merely a cruel joke by her obnoxious superpeers. But when the masked masses face a cataclysmic reckoning for previous heartless hoaxes, can our perpetually struggling heroine overcome her resentment and save the day? And can she cope with the further problems posed by cross-dressing vigilantes, dying wishes from preteen wannabe supervillains, telepathic "booty calls," a deeply depressed ninja, bedroom "cosplay" conflicts with her boyfriend, and worse?

Dark Horse has a new eye-catching ornament aimed at Whedon's brown-coats: *The Serenity Laser Engraved Acrylic Ornament*, which features a wireframe 3-D image of the Serenity ship inside a 4" x 4" clear lucite cube. Dark Horse a mechanism of ribbon that can be glued to the cube for hanging display, but as with most other "tombstone"-style collectibles, it may be best displayed sitting on a window sill or over a small LED light base (not included).



The new motion picture and television series is the inspiration for *Star Wars: The Clone Wars Volume One—Shipyards of Doom*, the kickoff of a new quarterly graphic novella series by Henry Gilroy and Matt & Shawn Fillbach.

Dark Horse collected editions include:

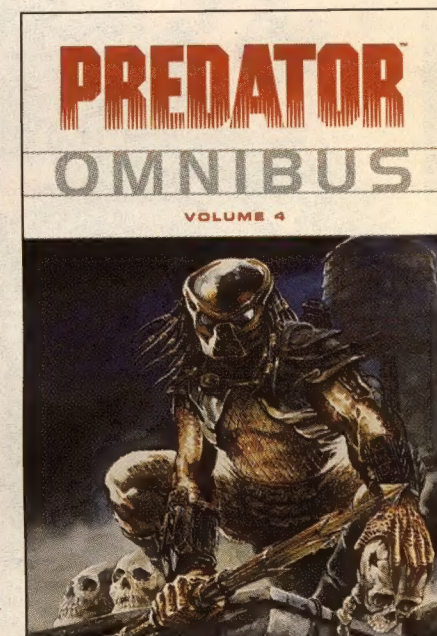
- *Abe Sapien Volume One: The Drowning*, collecting the five-issue miniseries by Mike Mignola & Jason Shawn Alexander;
- *Conan Volume 6: The Hand of Nergal*, collecting the final issues of *Conan* by Timothy Truman & Tomas Giorello;
- *The End League Volume One: Ballad of Big Nothing*, collecting the first five issues by Rick Remender & Mat Broome;
- *The Evil Dead* by Mark Verheiden & John Bolton, collecting the expansion of the classic horror film. "With permission from Sam Raimi & Rob Tapert," Verheiden explained, "we've expanded

the movie, meeting our characters back in their pre-deadite lives and opening up the story to see what happened between the events seen on screen";

- *Ghost Omnibus Volume One*, collecting *Ghost Special* #1, *Ghost* #s 1-12 (first series), and "Sweet Things" from *Decade of Dark Horse* #2;
- *Hellboy Library Edition Volume Two: The Chained Coffin, The Right Hand of Doom, & Others*, collecting the contents of *Hellboy* Vols 3 & 4 in one handsome oversized 9" x 12" hardcover volume, along with extensive supplemental materials, including more than 30 pages of previously unreleased sketches and designs;
- *Mister X Archives*, a 384-page hardcover collecting the entirety of Dean Motter's expressionist-noir SF drama featuring art by Jaime Hernandez, Paul Rivoche, Dave McKean, and others—and this volume corrects the errors that

crept into the previously-released iBooks collections;

- *Predator Omnibus Volume 4*, collecting 352 pages of Predator action from *Predator: Primal* #1-2, *Predator: Nemesis* #1-2, *Predator: Homeworld* #1-4, *Predator: Xenogenesis* #1-4, *Predator: Hell Come a Walkin'* #1-2, *Predator: Captive* one-shot, and "Predator: Demon's Gold" (from *DHP* #137);



- *Serenity: Better Days*, a 6" x 9" trade paperback collecting the three-issue miniseries by Joss Whedon, Brett Matthews, & Will Conrad;
- *Star Wars Omnibus—Early Victories*, a 336-page collection that includes *Shadow Stalker*, *Splinter of the Mind's Eye*, *Tales from Mos Eisley*, *River of Chaos*, and *Vader's Quest*, all long unavailable; and



- *The Umbrella Academy: Apocalypse Suite*, a \$79.95 oversized limited edition hardcover collection of the Gerard Way-Gabriel Ba miniseries, along with the short story from the 2007 Free Comic Book Day special, an expanded sketchbook, commentary, and more.

BATMAN R.I.P.
CHECKLIST

BATMAN #676-681
DETECTIVE #846-850
NIGHTWING #147-150
ROBIN #175-176
BATMAN & THE OUTSIDERS #11-13



dc comics.com
© TM & © 2008 DC Comics.
All Rights Reserved.